United Nations A/54/930–S/2000/637

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
30 June 2000

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda items 43, 44 and 89

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Identical letters dated 29 June 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to our letter of 19 June 2000 (A/54/924-S/2000/600), regarding recent and ongoing Israeli threats of force against the Palestinian people, I have been instructed to bring to your attention reports of unusual military movements and preparations being carried out by the Israeli forces in the occupied Gaza Strip. Such preparations are clearly related to the verbal threats of force that have been made by Israeli officials in recent weeks, as they involve the obvious fortification of Israeli military posts in the area.

While serious efforts are being exerted to break the stalemate in the peace process towards a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israeli efforts instead appear to be highly focused on military preparations and activities. Israeli troops have been sighted on the coast of the Gaza Strip carrying out amphibious landing exercises and manoeuvres with the support of military helicopters. Moreover, there have been reports of the movement and redistribution of both light and heavy equipment and weaponry around the illegal Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip as well as additional fortification around those settlements. In addition, Israeli personnel have been sighted installing camera equipment for obvious monitoring purposes in the area.

These activities come in the wake of the threats made by Israeli officials, including military and political officials, which were referred to in the above-mentioned letter. Similar to verbal threats of force against the Palestinian people, these kinds of unusual and intense military preparations and manoeuvres serve only

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to heighten tensions between the two sides. Moreover, these actions negatively affect the peace process and make increasingly difficult the negotiations between the two sides.

I wish to reiterate that while the Palestinian side remains committed to the peace process, the Palestinian leadership cannot ignore this Israeli mobilization of force in the occupied territory. The international community should be aware of such military preparations and mobilization and, in this regard, should exert efforts to ensure stability in the area and to promote adherence to international law and norms by Israel, the occupying Power, towards a just and peaceful settlement between the two sides.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 43, 44 and 89, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda Abdelhady **Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.